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"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illumination, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these States. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is more than worth all the means. And that posterity will triumph..."

John Adams, July 3, 1776

Happy
BIRTHDAY
America!



"Public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed." **Abraham Lincoln**

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Fourth
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The American Soul: Split Personality...in Need of Healing

Happy 238th Birthday, Shipmates!

We hope our 28th card finds you fulfilling John Adams' prescient prophecy.

We must admit...at times, this year's "happy" feels somewhat forced... A recent Pew Research Center report says **the country is more divided than at any time since Reconstruction.**

When I returned from my Navy Reserve mobilization four years ago and was shocked at how bad the so-called recovery was progressing, a mentor said it will become **really bad if our young adults start believing this economy is as good as it's going to get.**

Five years into the "recovery," the news reports the **worst labor participation rates** since the early 1970s, "**Boomerang Kids,**" who move back with parents because they can't buy homes, and a Wharton economist asking point blank: **Has America given up?**

Worst, **many of us** who care deeply about our communities, states and country—those who volunteer in the civic, business, nonprofit and political organizations—**are tuning out all the bad news.**

"I just checked out," confided one formerly very active friend recently. **We're the most divided since Reconstruction—with infinitely more ways to stay distracted.**

Use this Fourth to re-focus.

Use the birthday of the most powerful and simultaneously most compassionate country the world has ever known...to **re-engage.**

We're where we are because of bad policies and poor leadership—from both sides of the aisle. You and I, if we're engaged, *can still change both.*

But we must be smart about it—demonizing those who disagree gets us nowhere. **A plane must use both a left and right wing to fly and a country's citizens must challenge both wings to soar.**

Ironically, despite the bombastic entertainers of radio and cable TV, **an unlikely partnership of the left and right—populists and libertarians—is forming** regarding such issues as corporate and union welfare, government overreach, and our most appropriate role in the world.

Whether these new partners are right or wrong isn't the point; at least they've dropped the name calling and are working together. They've learned the lesson our forefathers understood; described in a quote from the musical "1776," in which Ben Franklin reprimands John Adams for being too unyielding:

John, the issue here is independence! Maybe you have forgotten that fact, but I have not! These men, no matter how much we may disagree with them.... And whether you like them or not, they and the people they represent will be part of this new nation that YOU hope to create. Now, either learn how to live with them, or pack up and go home!

We actually elected many dedicated public servants who work tirelessly to do the right thing, even if their work draws attacks from their

respective party's extremes. We must **bolster those who offer solutions,** not just rhetoric.

The issues are daunting...and many. And **the threat is far more than economic.** Again, **bad policies multiplied our enemies around the world:** evil thrives and wishes us dead.

Right and wrong, good and evil clearly exist in the world, and while **the United States is by no means perfect,** we clearly do—or at least attempt—**the right thing more often than not.** *Islamic jihadists and Russian KGB agents-turned-presidents do not.*

When we work together—one nation—we can defeat any threat anywhere any time.

But one nation only happens if we put down the tablet and smartphone, remove the earbuds, turn off the TV and **make a difference.** By checking back in and engaging our leaders—

changing them where necessary—we'll do what our founding fathers expected of us.

As deTocqueville wrote in 1835: "**The greatness of America lies...in her ability to repair her faults.**" Think about it: we've experienced huge faults in our history—and come back stronger every time.

This time won't be any easier. But we know for a fact: **Americans don't give up.**

President Truman stated, "America was not built on fear. **America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.**" So, as Florida Governor Rick Scott likes to say, "Let's get to work!"

May God bless our country with the courage to heal itself. May God continue to bless The American Soul.

Happy Independence Day!

Polly, Steve & Lindsay Kaufman
with Minnie, the Magnificent Chi-Mutt

